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INDUSTRIAL HEALTH ENACTMENTS IN POLAND

AUTHORIZE SHORTER WORK HOURS -- Warsaw Przegląd Związkowy, May 50

The Legislative Sejm of the Republic of Poland has passed a law authorizing a shorter workday for occupations which are harmful to health or which involve particular physical strain. The law provides for a 6-hour day and a 36-hour week, a 7-hour day or a 42-hour week, or a 7½-hour day and a 45-hour week, according to working conditions and the degree of health hazard to the worker.

The resolution of the Council of Ministers, which was adopted on the proposal of the Minister of Labor and Social Welfare, is to list the plants and jobs affected by the shorter work norms and the period for which these norms apply. Present wage scales will not be affected by changes in working hours.

Soviet scientists define three groups of health hazards to the worker. In the first group are found those hazards which result from poor organization of work, leading to excessive muscular and mental strain, uncomfortable position at work, excessive and uneven strain on particular organs, etc.

The second group comprises health hazards connected with the production process, which may be of a physical, chemical, or biological nature. Examples of health hazards of a physical nature are: high temperatures; radiation from blast furnaces, molten metal, glass, radium, on X-rays; high atmospheric pressure in caissons and diving, or extremely low pressure in mountains or in flying; and noise and shock, as in work with pneumatic drills.

Chemical hazards include industrial poisoning from raw materials or technological processes. Medical personnel, veterinarians, cattle raisers, etc, are exposed to various bacteriological infections.

The third group comprises health hazards caused by poor sanitation in establishments.

Shortening of the workday is justifiable in the first and second groups but not in the third group, because steps should be taken to correct these conditions.

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To determine whether or not a given job warrants a shorter workday, the following points must be established: that one or more of the hazards mentioned exists; that the effects are clearly injurious; and that the worker is exposed to such circumstances long enough each day to cause injury. This investigation must be made separately for each job classification and in each particular establishment.

REQUIRE MILK FOR WORKERS EXPOSED TO POISONING -- Sosnowiec Pracownik Chemiczny,
May 50

The law requiring factory milk rations for certain categories or workers dates back to 6 March 1928. To assure uniformity in the application of this law, the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare has set forth the following general principles.

The field work inspector determines the types of work injurious to health which require milk rations, particularly jobs which expose workers to poisoning by gas, vapors, dust, etc.

Poisonous gases include carbon monoxide from furnaces and gas generators, gases created by acetylene burners, etc. Other irritants include dust from ashes, lime dust, dust from stonecutting and sand blasting, etc. Workers exposed to lead poisoning should also receive milk as an antidote.

It is not compulsory for an employer to give milk to workers on jobs which do not entail exposure to poisoning.

The recommended portion of milk per worker is one-half liter daily. This amount may be increased to one liter but only in cases of high concentration of poisonous gases or excessive amounts of poisonous dust or irritants. The milk must be taken by the worker at the plant.

Not all factories have met these conditions, although dairy cooperatives have already organized a regular distribution of milk. Factory councils, in agreement with the work inspection, should see that this legal obligation on part of employers is carried out.

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